



UNESCO Series on Women in African History

Mariama Ba

And the choice of Ndeye



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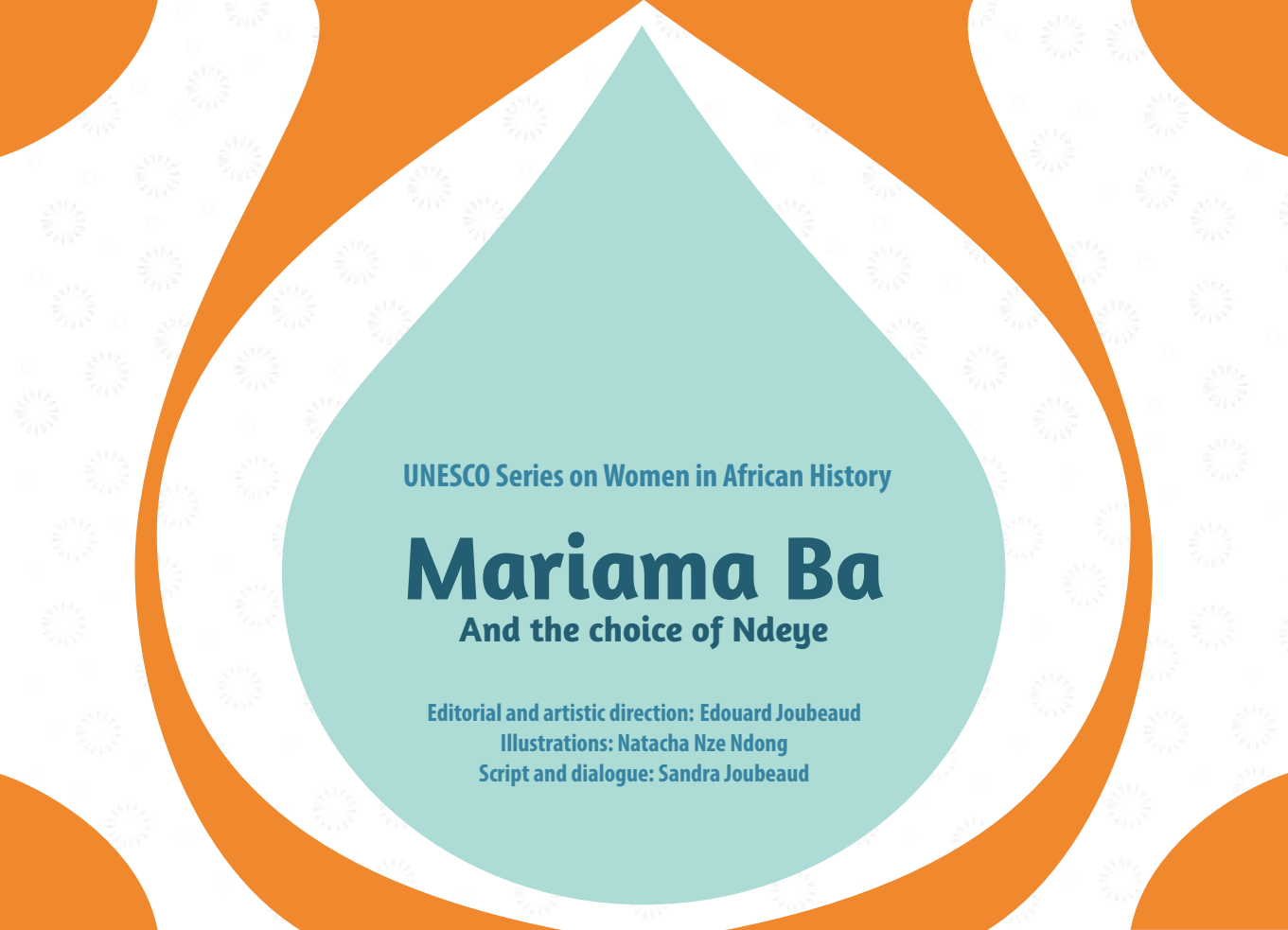


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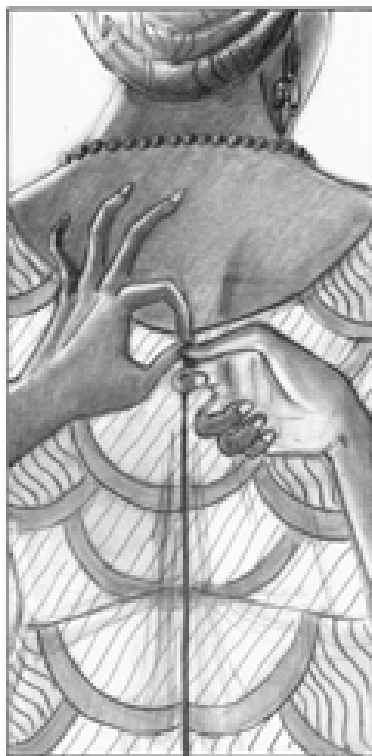
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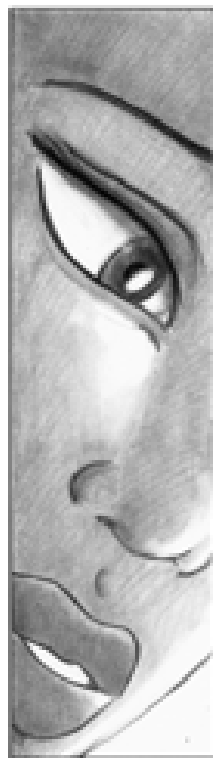
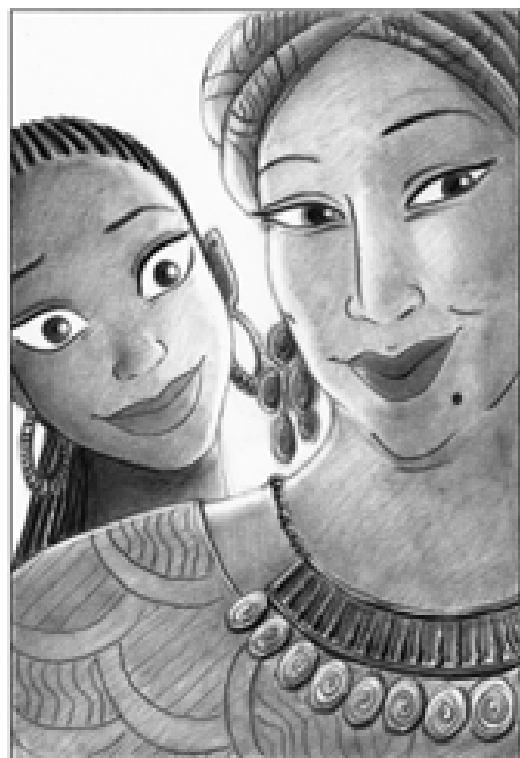
Script and dialogue: Sandra Joubaud



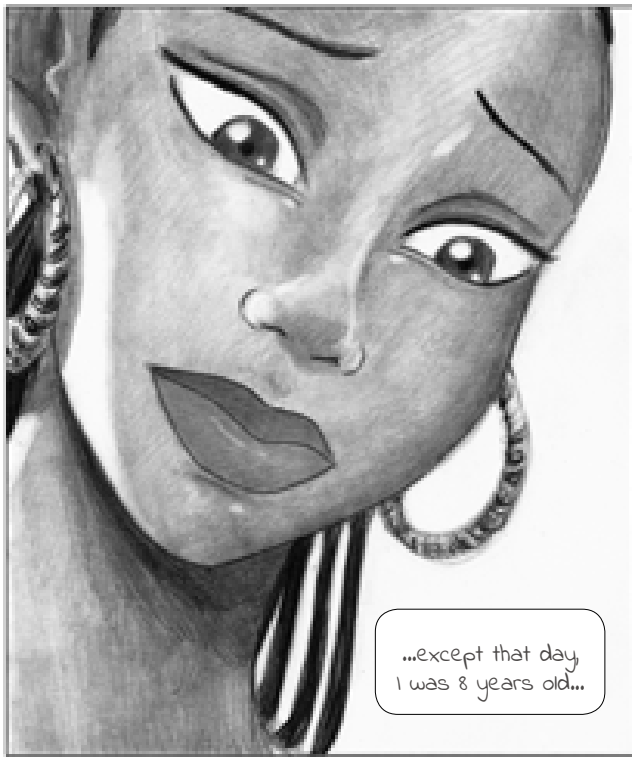
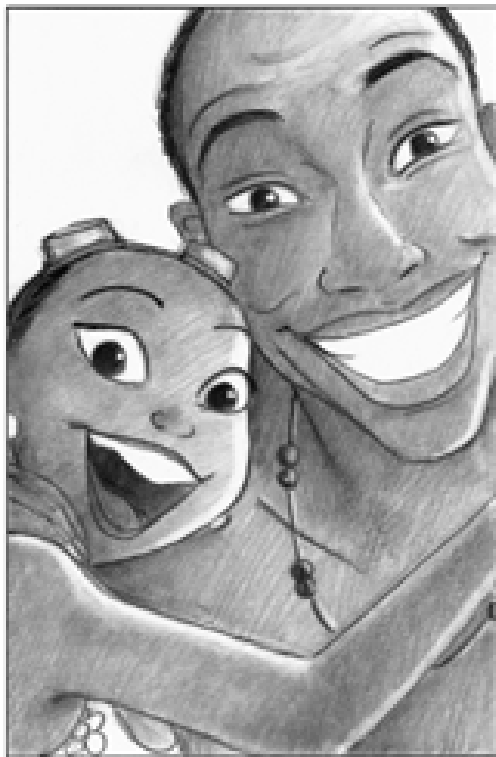










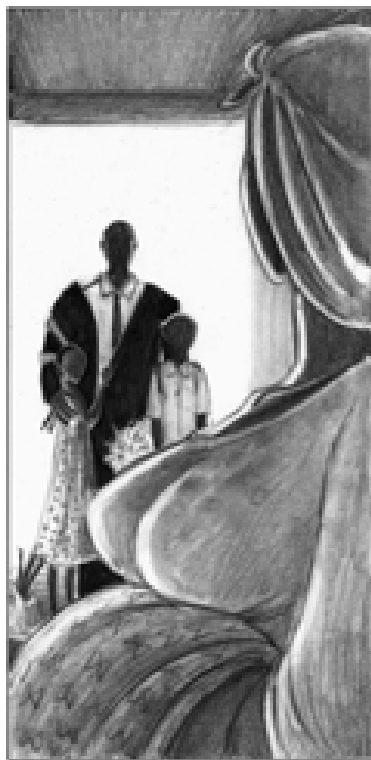


...except that day,
I was 8 years old...





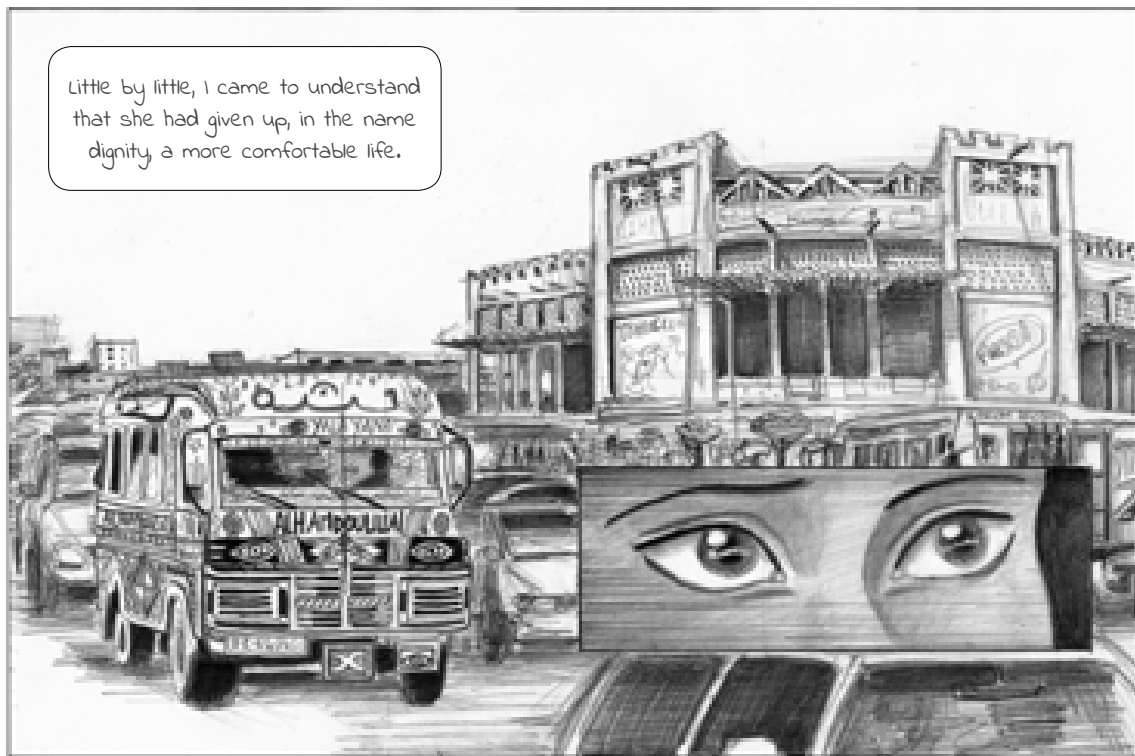
* second wife.

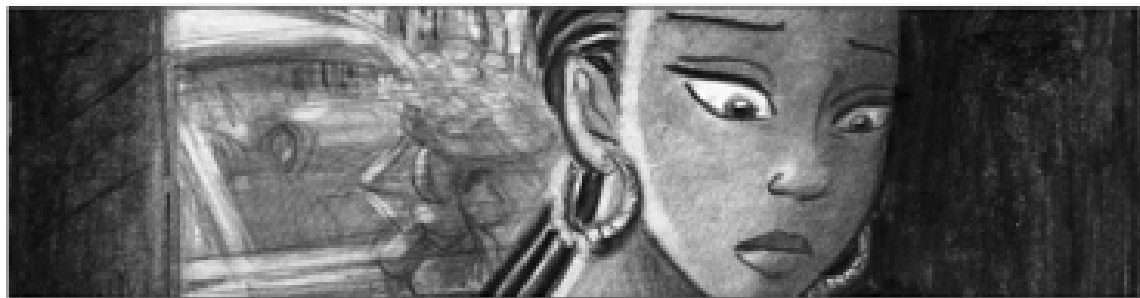




They loved one another,
but neither would give in
and we left for
another life.

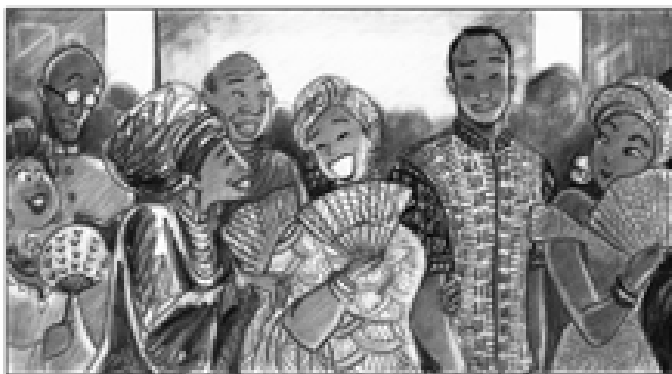
Little by little, I came to understand
that she had given up, in the name
dignity, a more comfortable life.





Sometimes I wondered whether she regretted giving up her choice, and if she would have preferred to go to the theatre with her husband instead of her son.

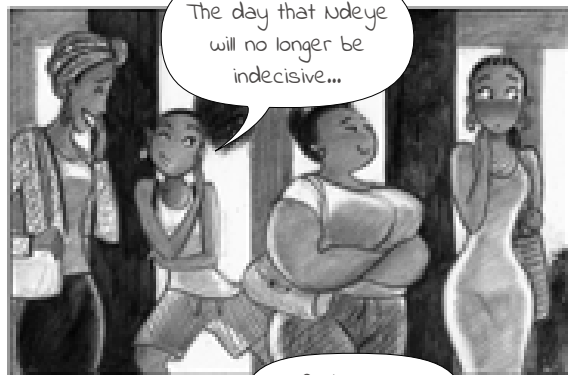


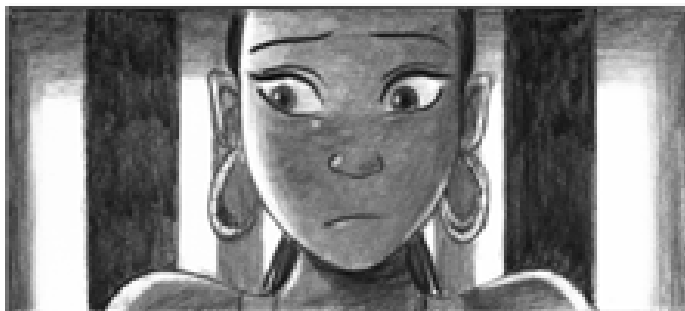
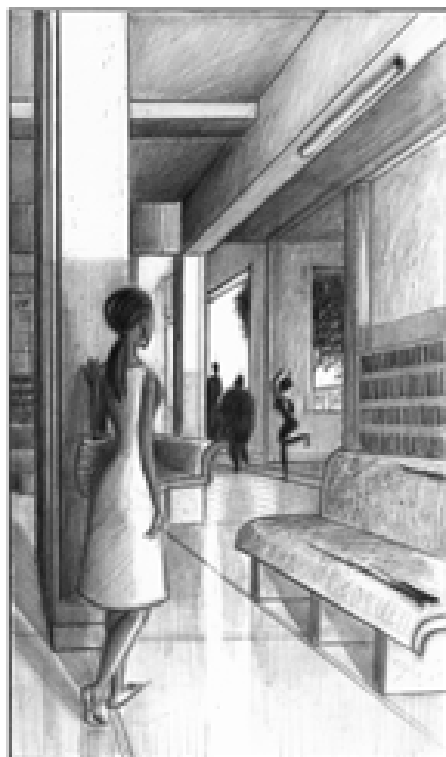


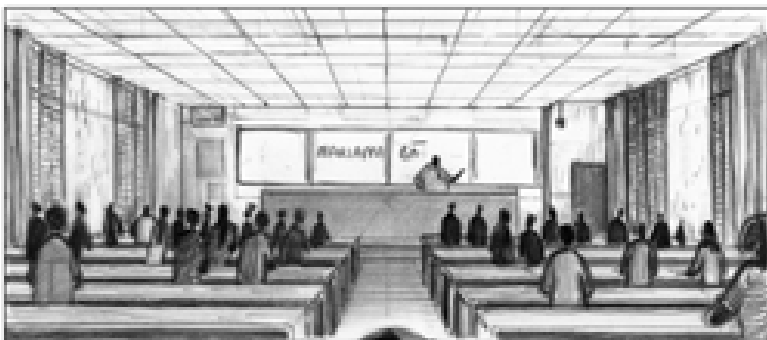
But all this
vanished
behind her
smile...





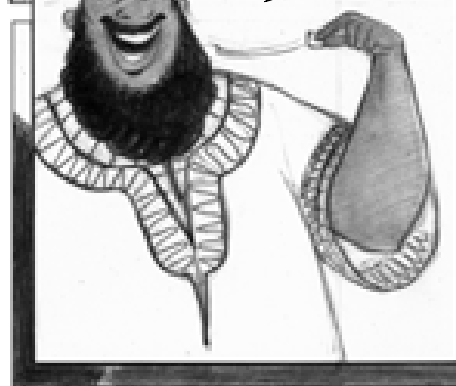




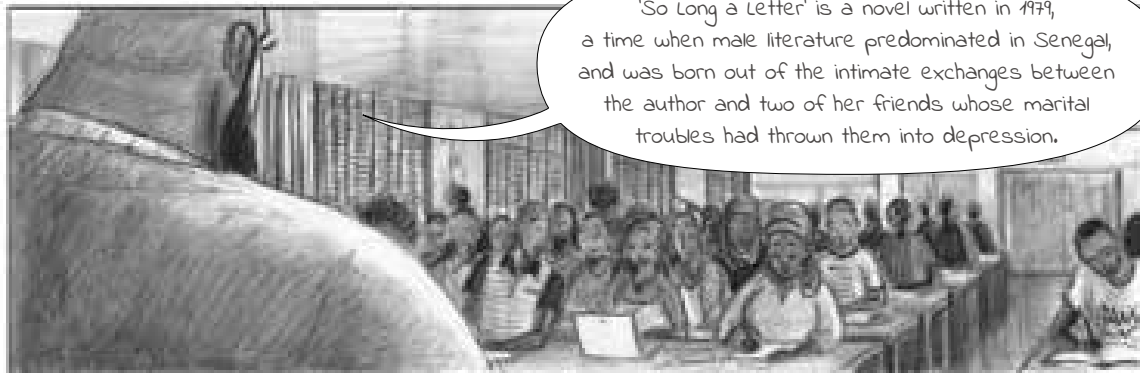


we have finished
our analysis of the novel 'The Ber-
ly of the Atlantic' which, beyond
the story has, I hope, allowed you
to realise your luck in having such
a perceptive professor with such
good advice...

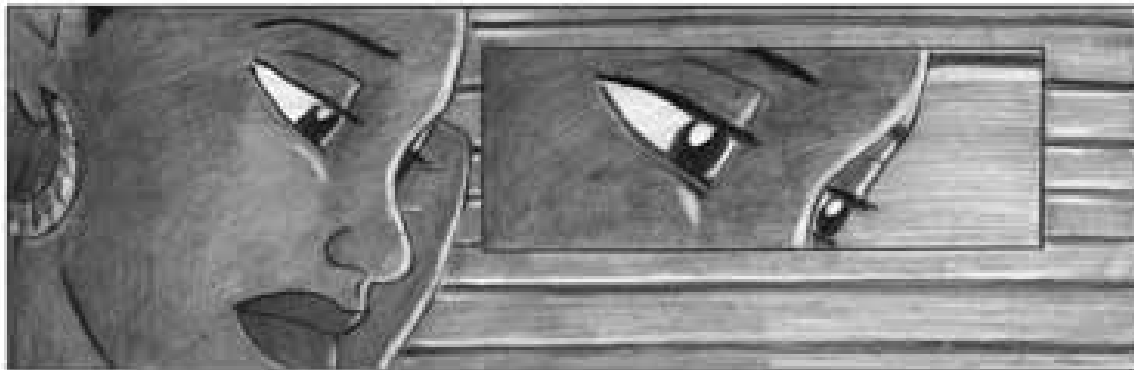




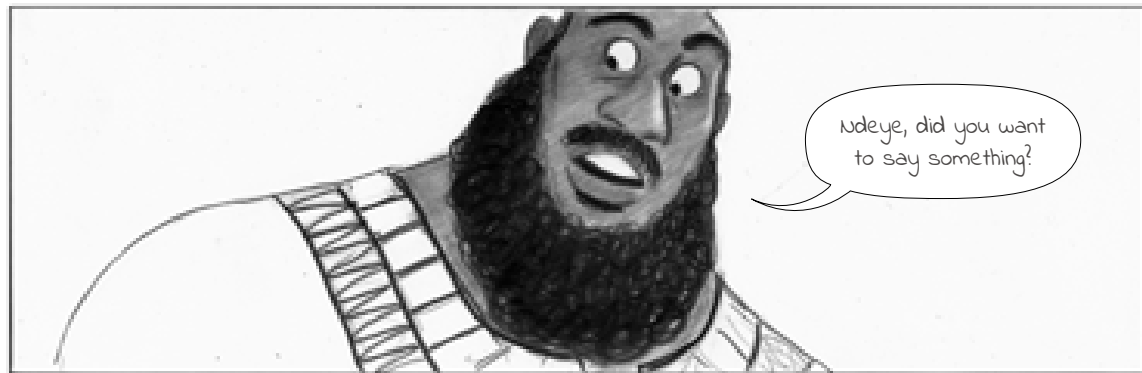
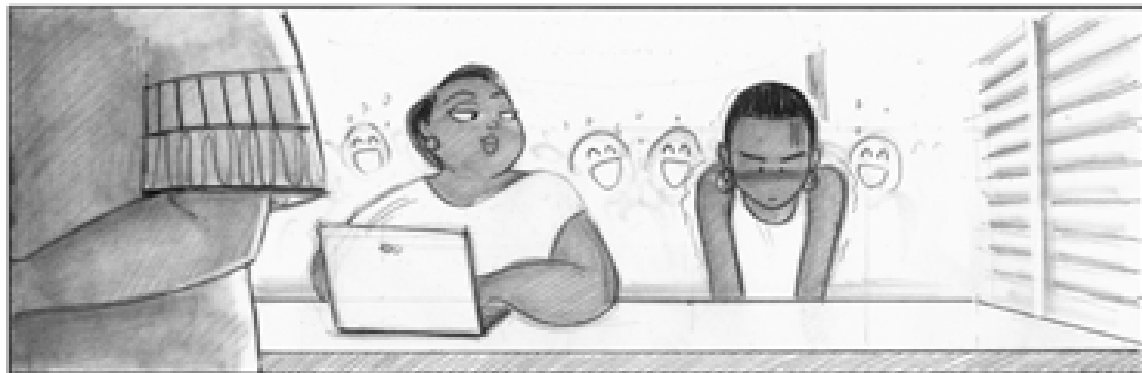




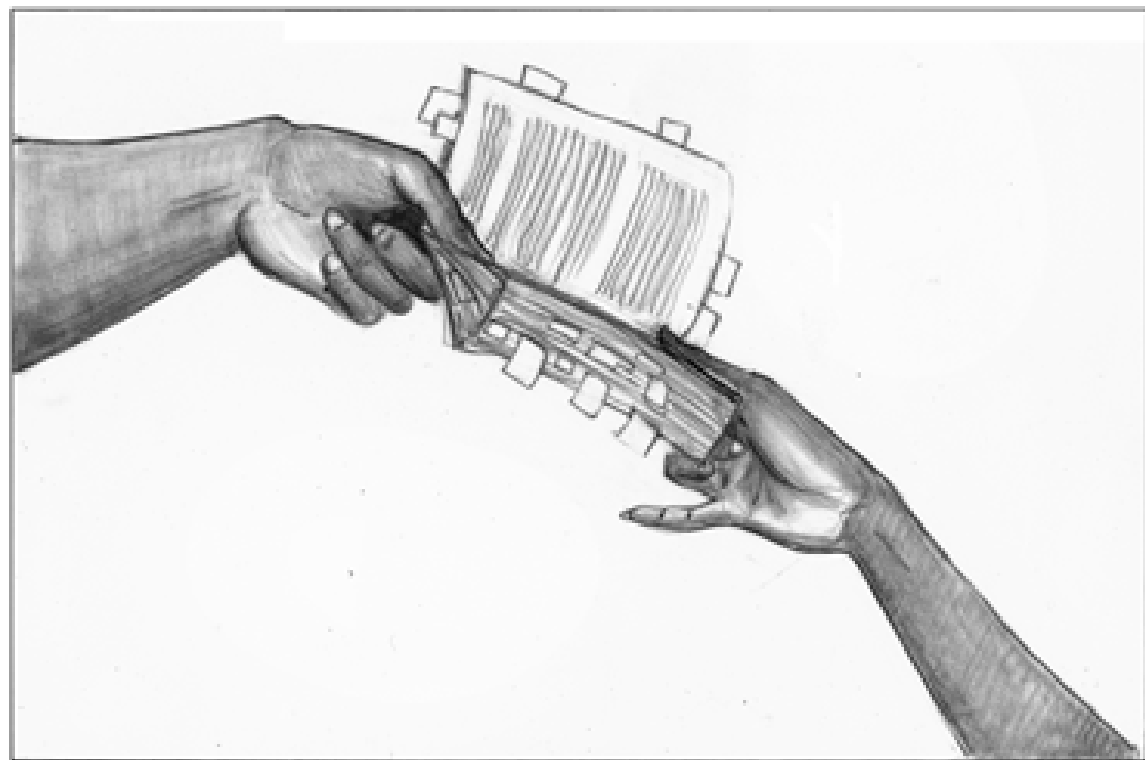




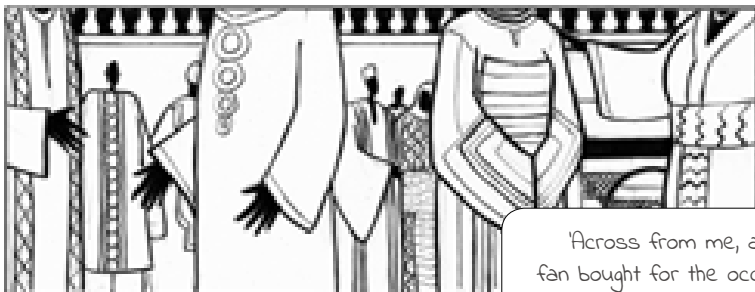




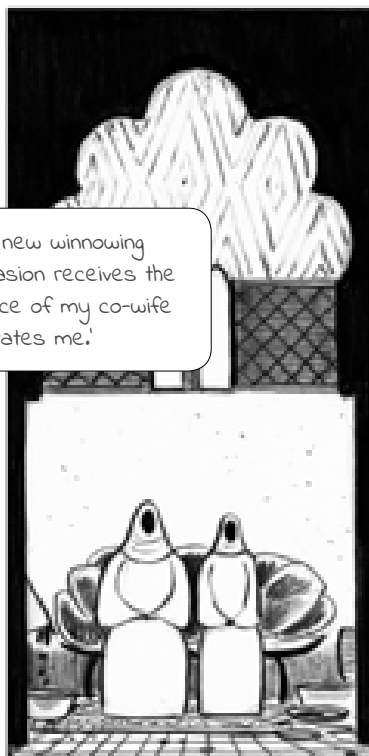






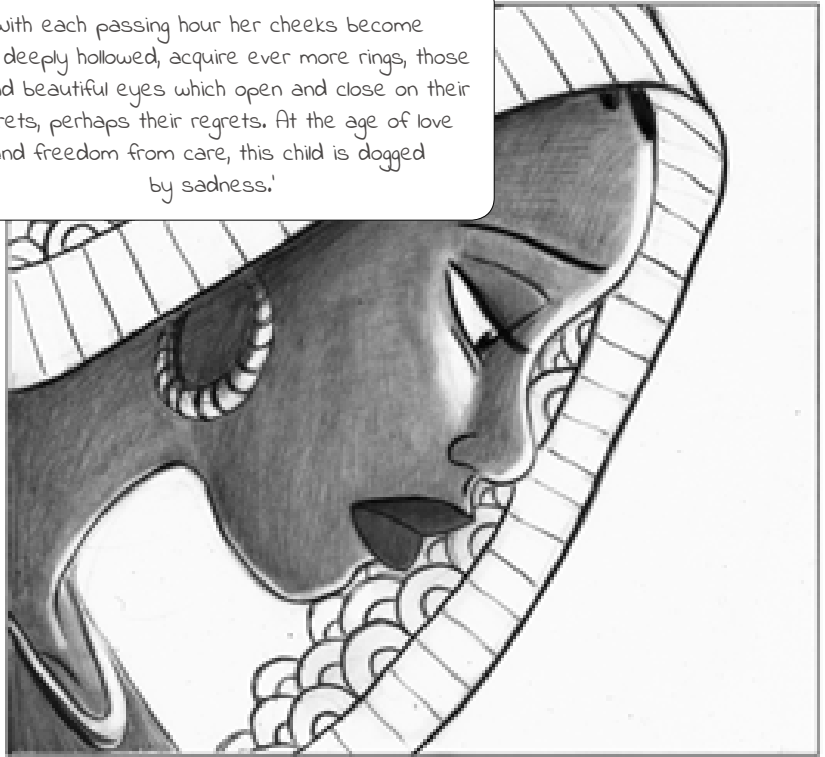
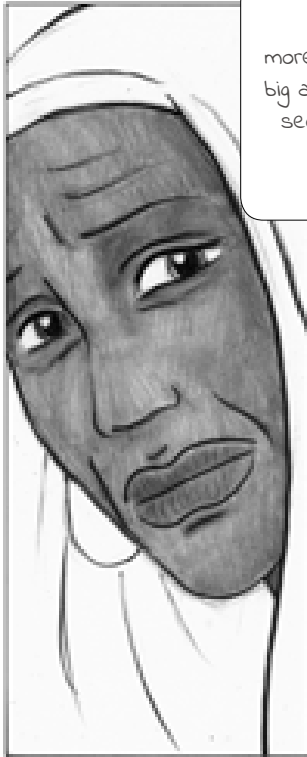


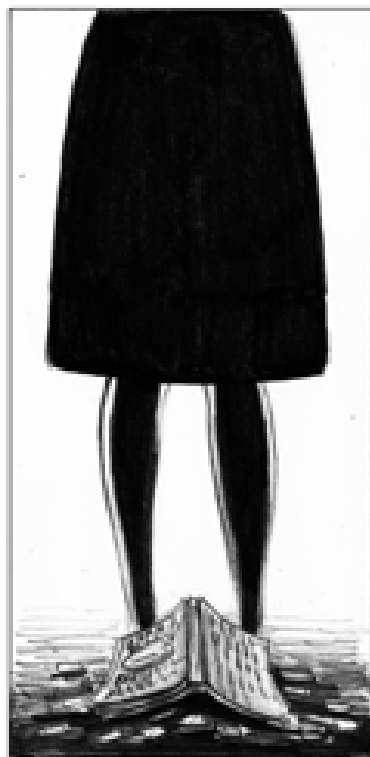
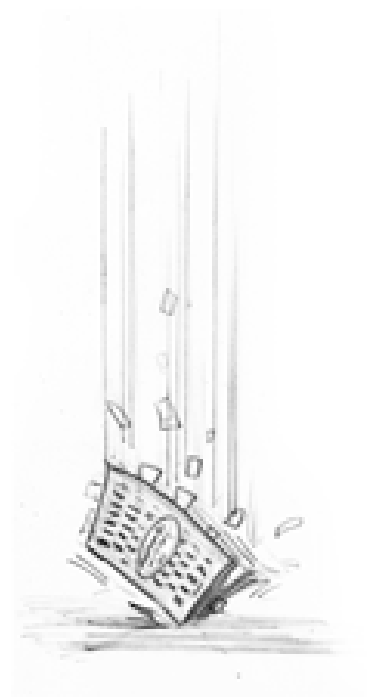
'Across from me, a new winnowing fan bought for the occasion receives the first alms. The presence of my co-wife beside me irritates me.'



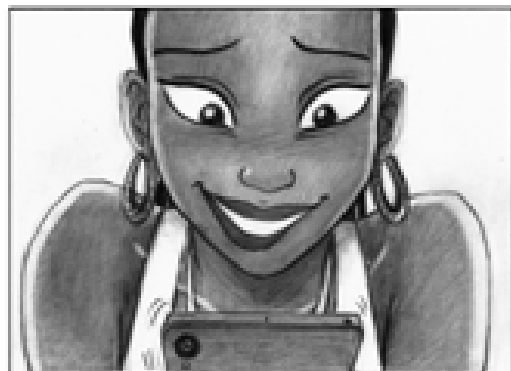


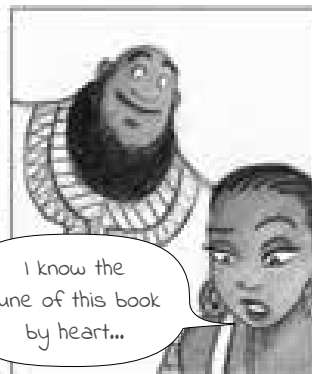
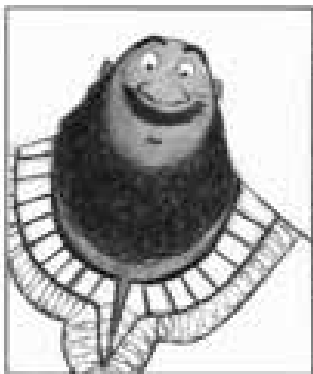
'with each passing hour her cheeks become more deeply hollowed, acquire ever more rings, those big and beautiful eyes which open and close on their secrets, perhaps their regrets. At the age of love and freedom from care, this child is dogged by sadness.'

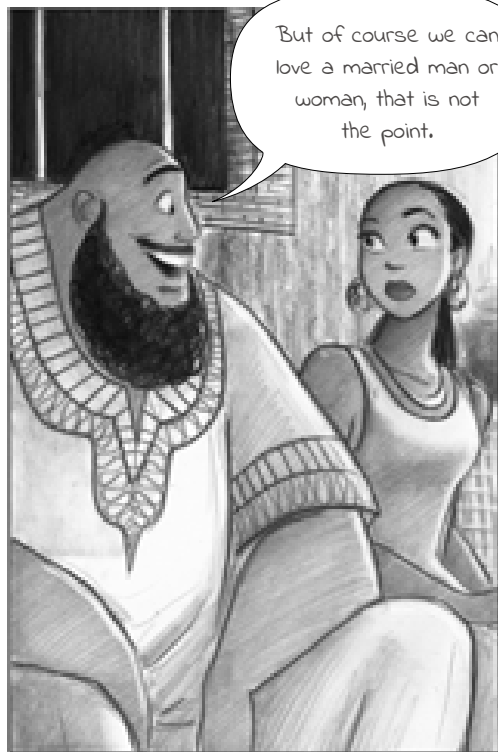












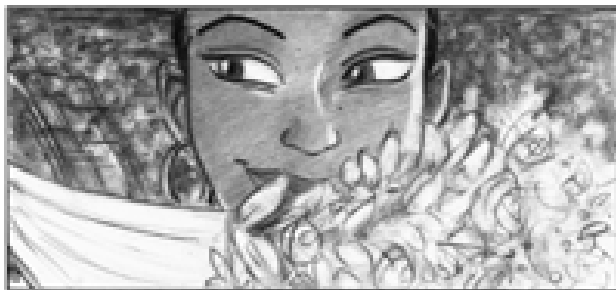
But of course we can
love a married man or
woman, that is not
the point.



And then these days,
second wives are often
conquerors, not victims.











Really,
everybody?

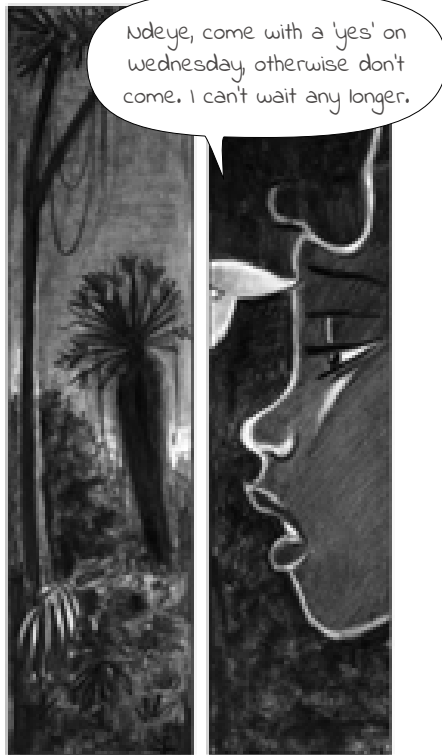
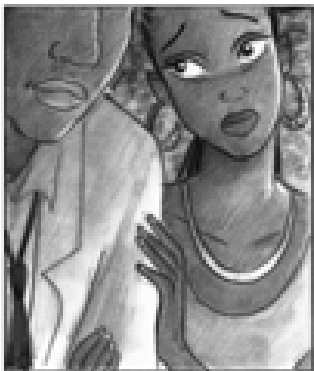


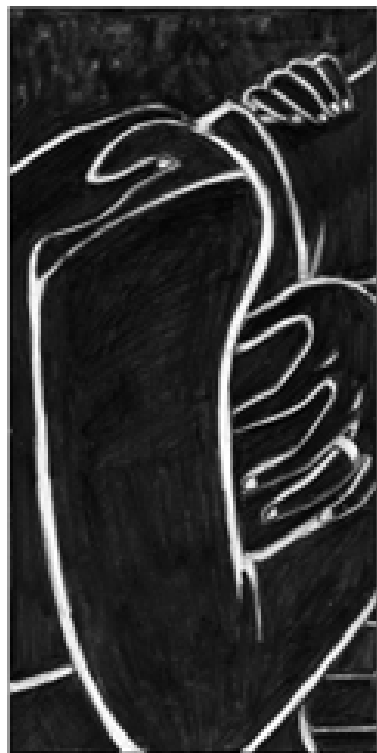
Babe, I've never
hidden my marriage
from you...

But Amadou,
what will your
wife say?



Naturally, she will be
sad. No one likes to feel
replaced. But you're not a
replacement Ndeye,
or a sequel...







The same happy smile lit
up our faces.



The pressure of your hand
became more tender,
more possessive.



Everything in me gave in and
our relationship endured over
the school years and during
the holidays, strengthened in
me by the discovery of your
subtle intelligence...

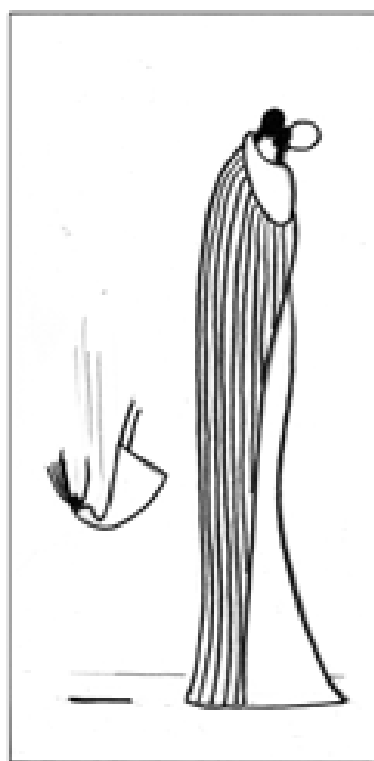
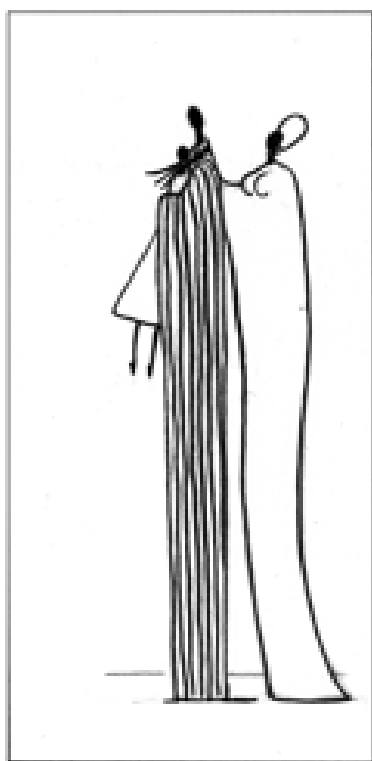
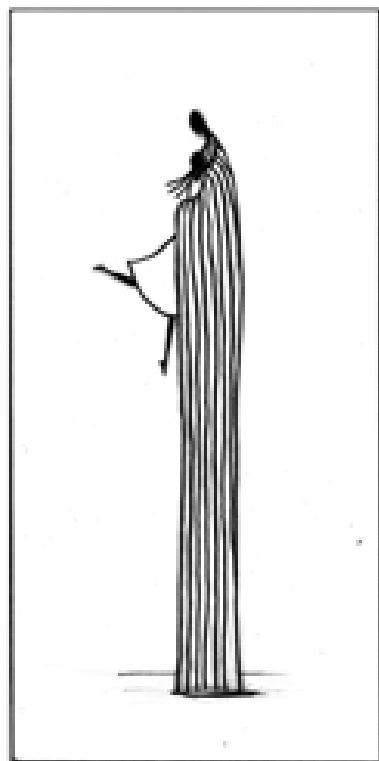


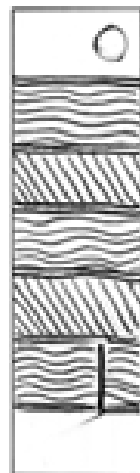
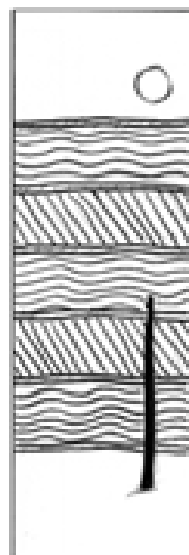
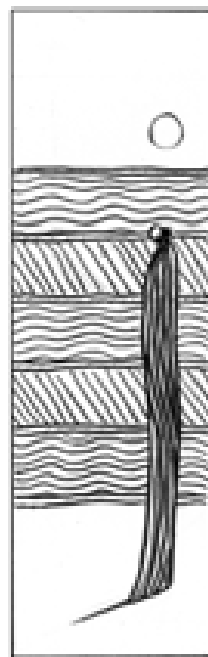
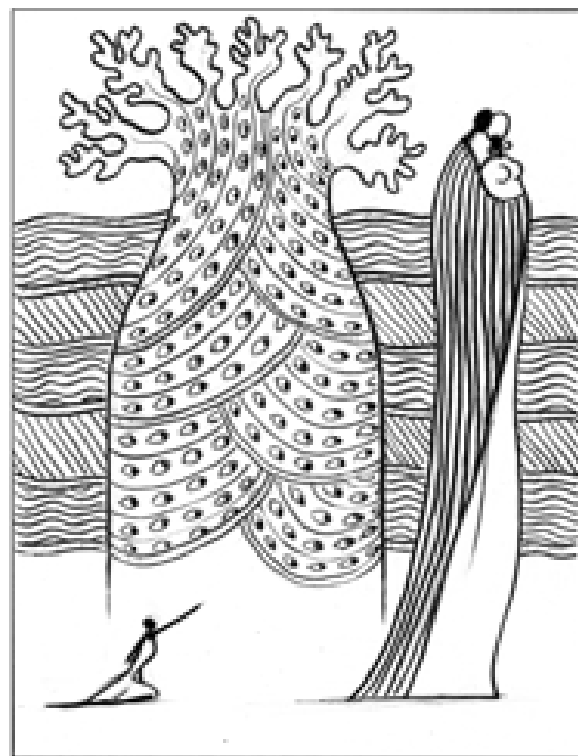


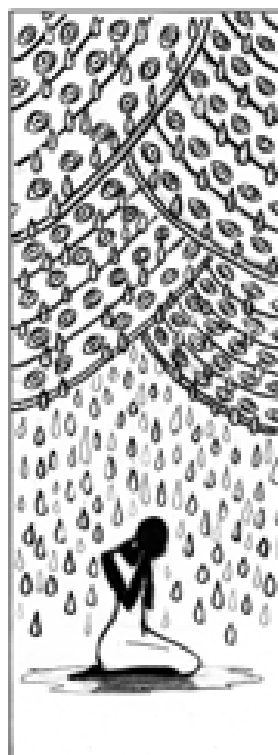
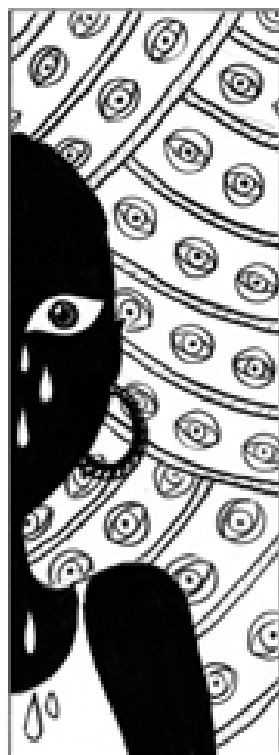
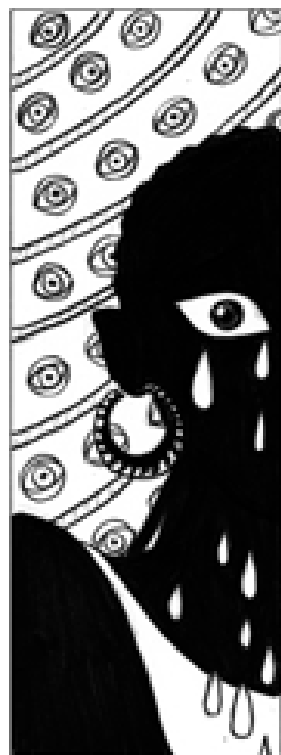
...by your embracing sensitivity,
of your readiness to help, of
your ambition, which suffered
no mediocrity.

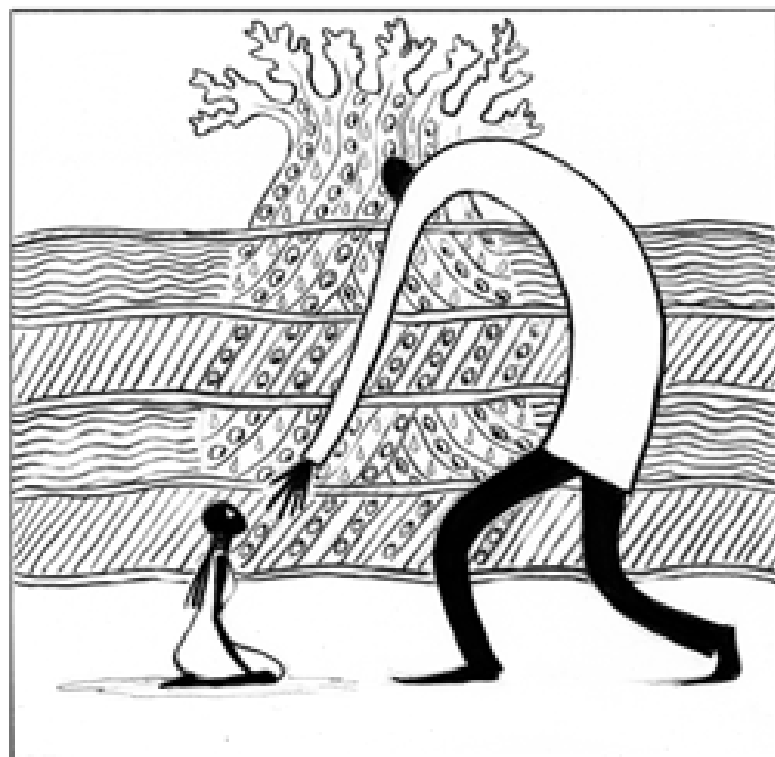


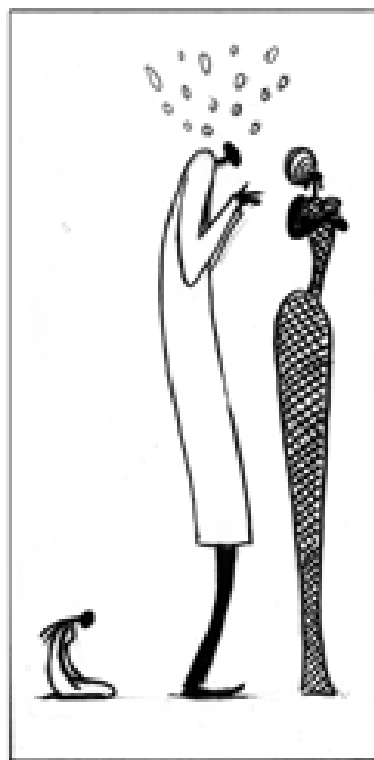
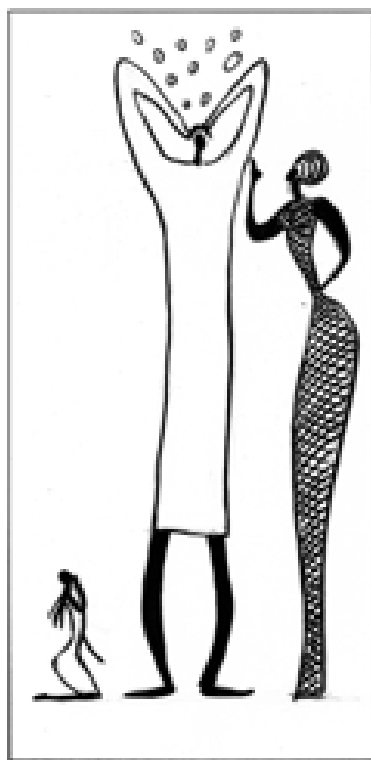
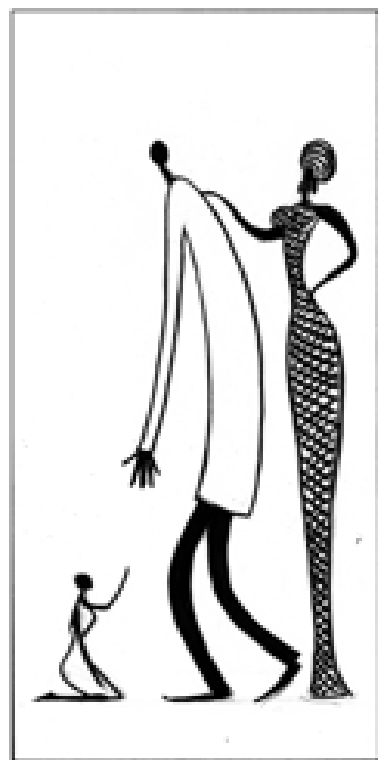


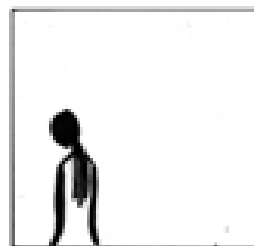


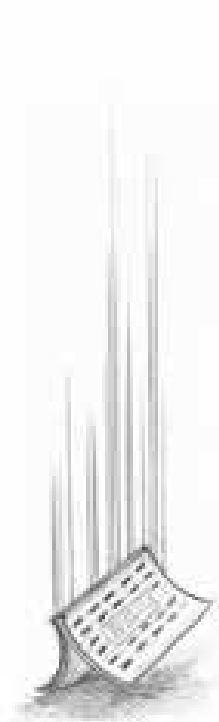


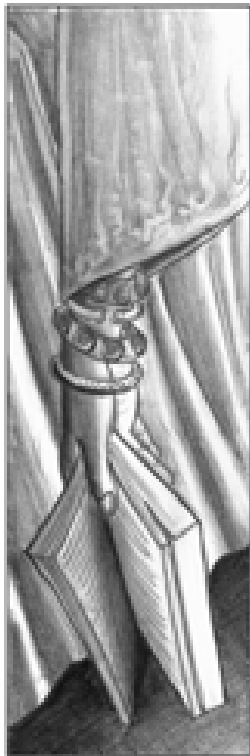










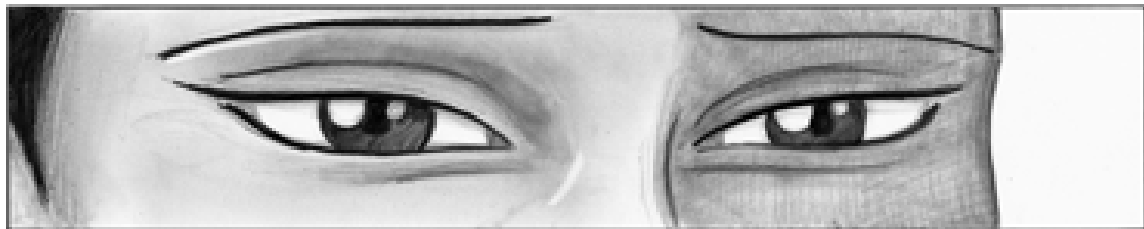


we would walk along the Dakar
Corniche, one of the most beautiful
in west Africa, a sheer work of
art wrought by nature...

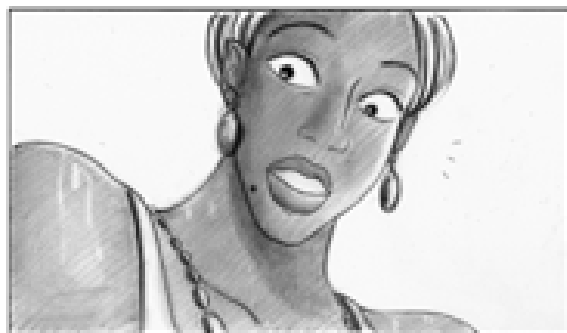




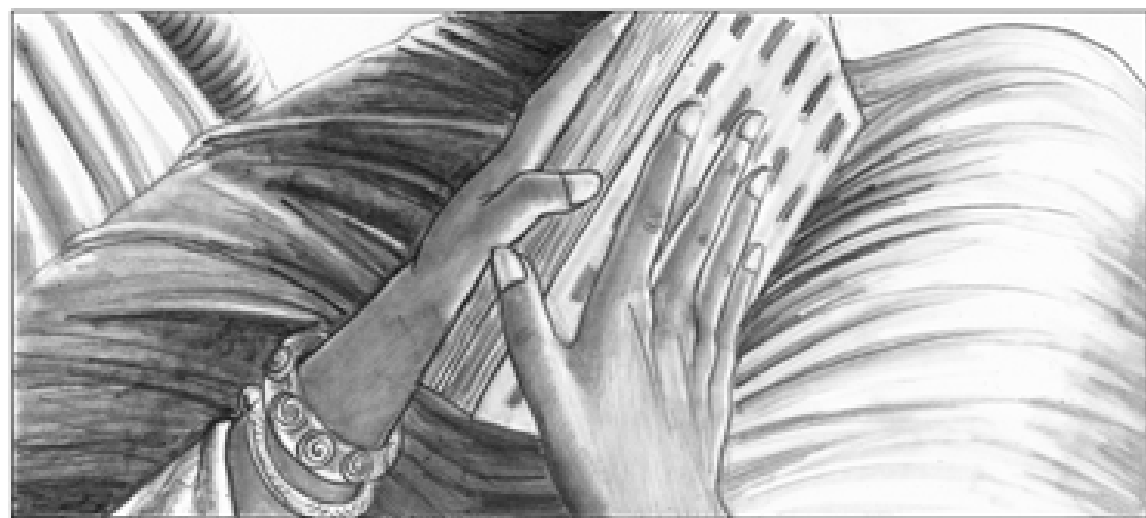
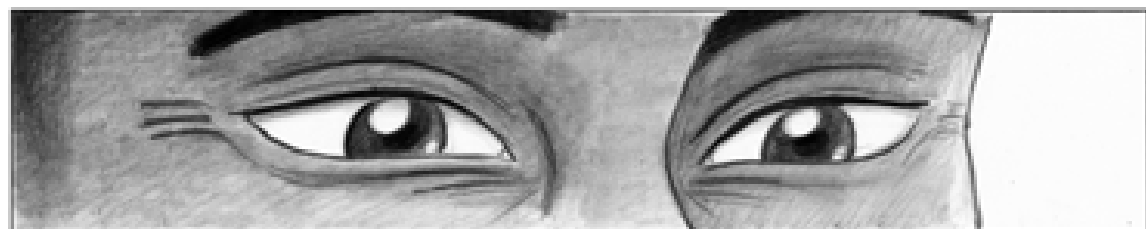
Rounded or pointed rocks, black or
ochre-coloured, overlooking the ocean.
Greenery, sometimes a veritable
hanging garden, spread out under the
clear sky. The sea air would
put us in good humour.



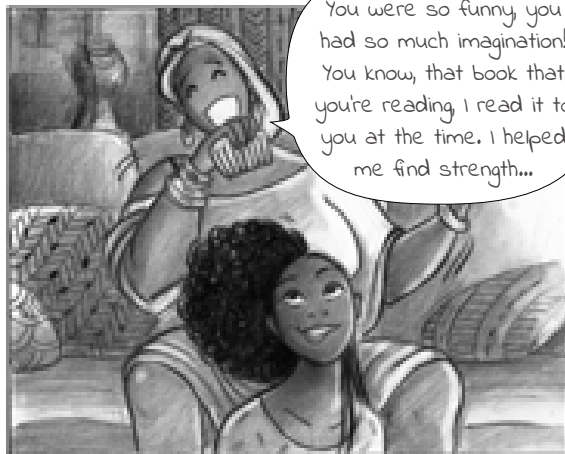


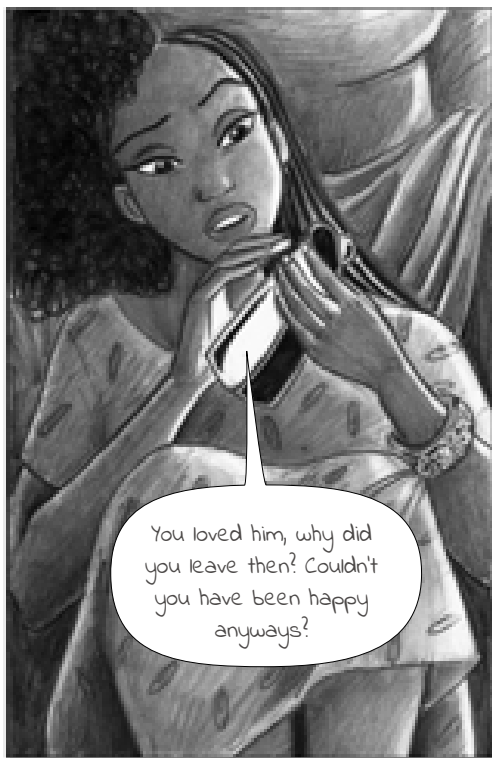
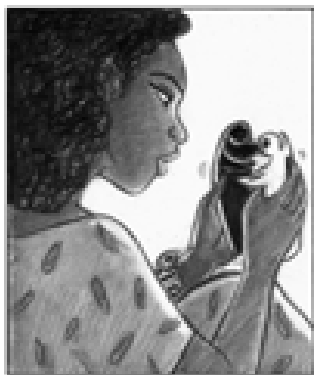












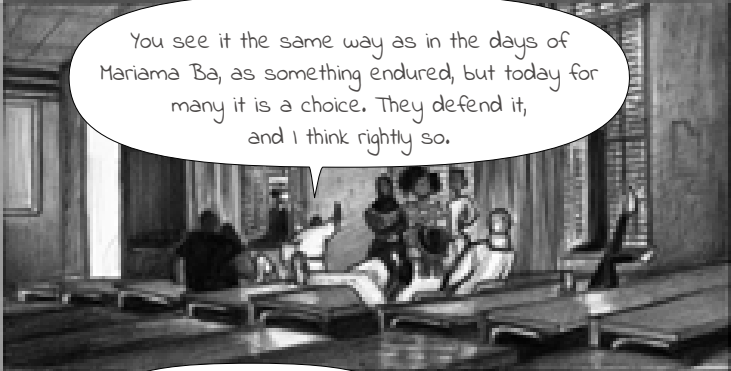


I left precisely because I
loved him, because
I didn't want to be happy
'anyways', like you say.





No, but stop,
it's my question! why do
you want all the girls to
think like you?



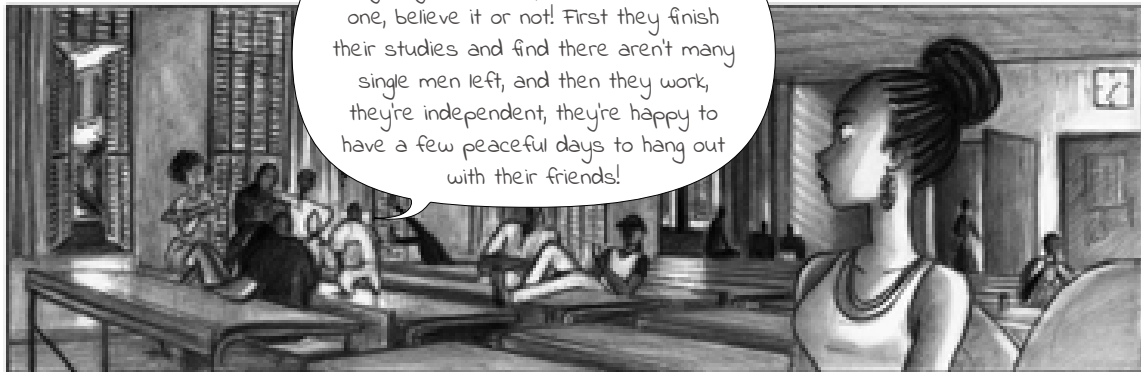
You see it the same way as in the days of
Mariama Ba, as something endured, but today for
many it is a choice. They defend it,
and I think rightly so.



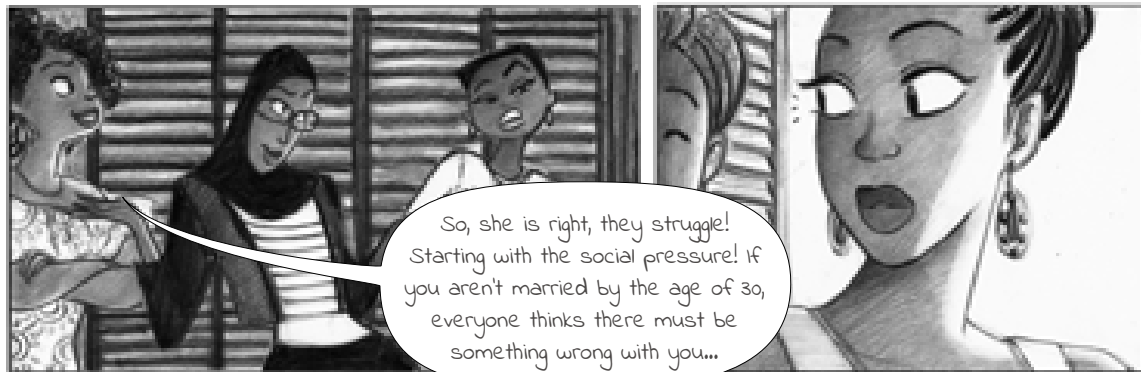
oh yeah?!! And what
exactly has changed? No, but
who have you seen, huh?



Calm down, I'm only repeating what they say, and I've spoken to more than one, believe it or not! First they finish their studies and find there aren't many single men left, and then they work, they're independent, they're happy to have a few peaceful days to hang out with their friends!



So, she is right, they struggle! Starting with the social pressure! If you aren't married by the age of 30, everyone thinks there must be something wrong with you...





well, it's true that most of
my sister's friends don't want a
co-wife, but without exception they
all prefer a co-wife to no husband!



Enough! Be the spokespersons of the opposite sex, that will be more interesting! we'll never get anywhere like this.





we have far greater sexual needs. It is by the mercy of Allah that we have polygamy. I am devout, and so I can satisfy my needs lawfully.

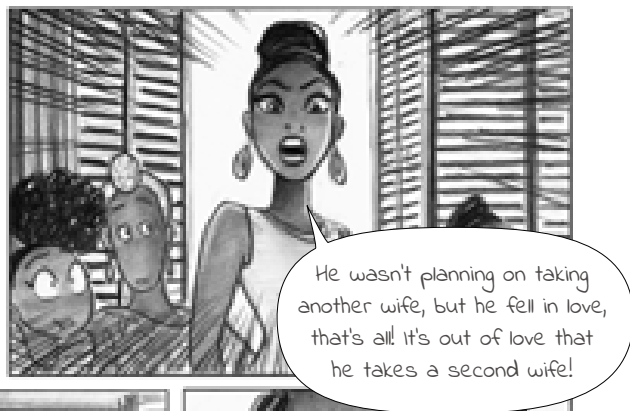
The flame has gone out, my second wife will rekindle it, and everyone will benefit!

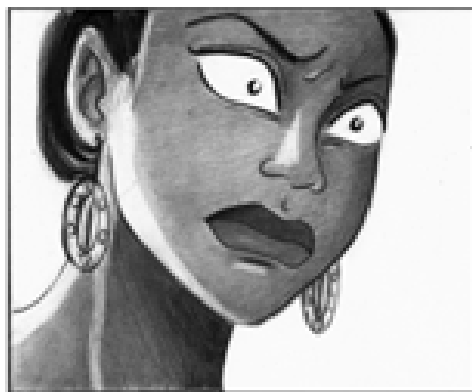
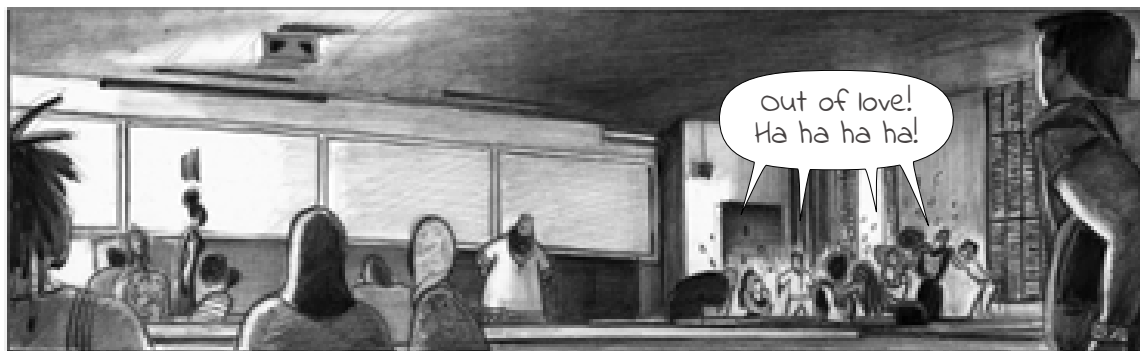


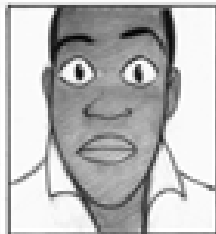
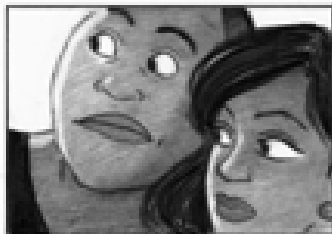
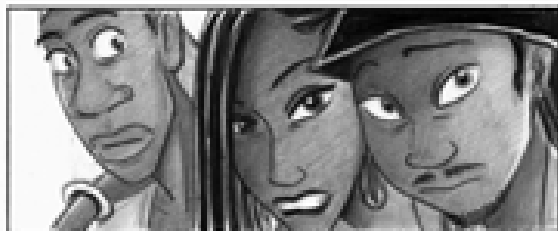
My first is unable to give me a son! I have no choice!



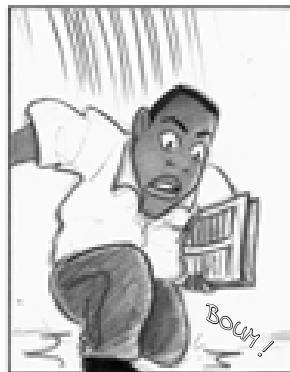
Love doesn't come in limited quantities, everything I give to my third wife takes nothing away from the first...

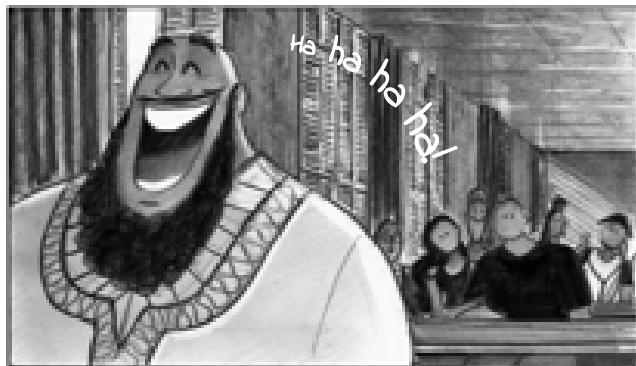
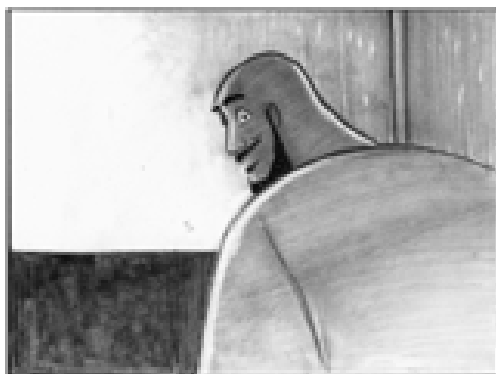
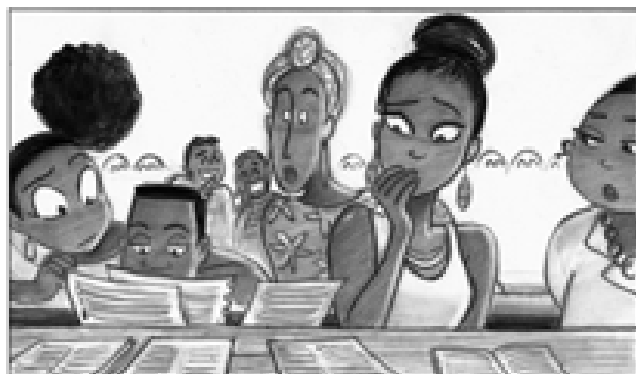






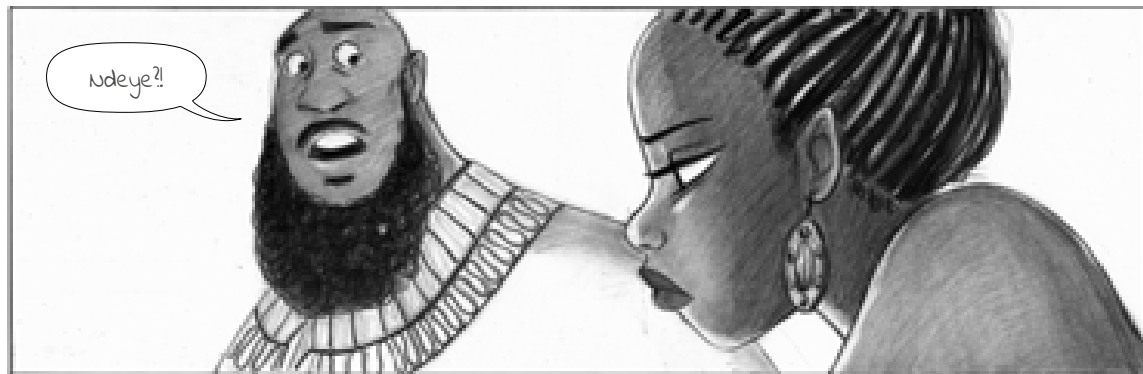


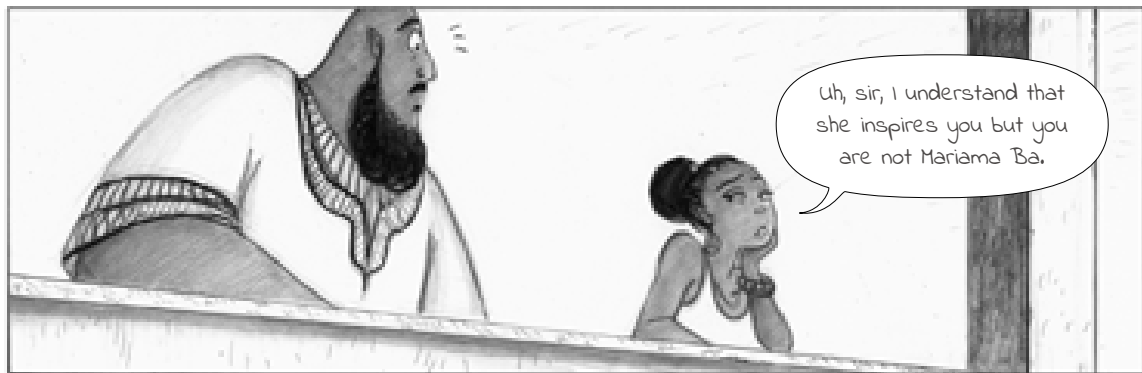
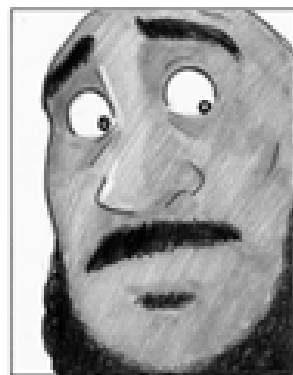
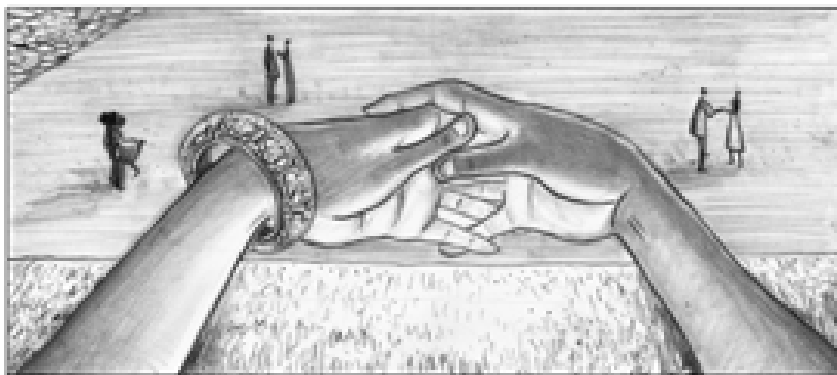




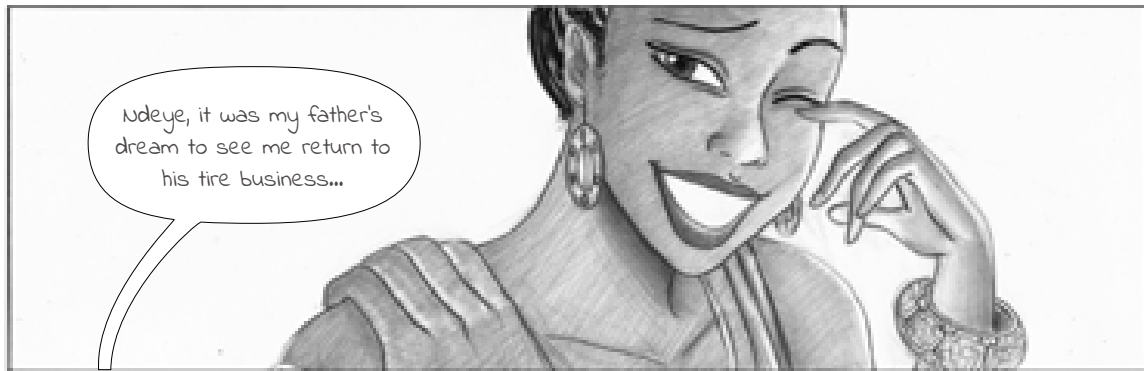
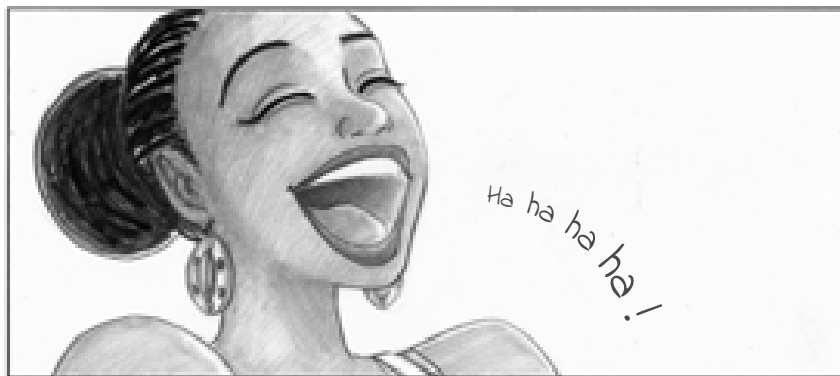








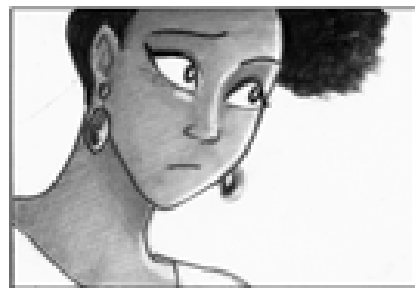
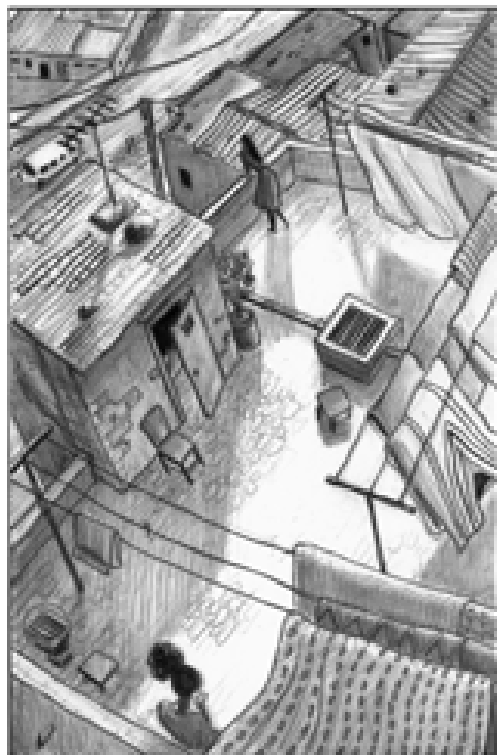


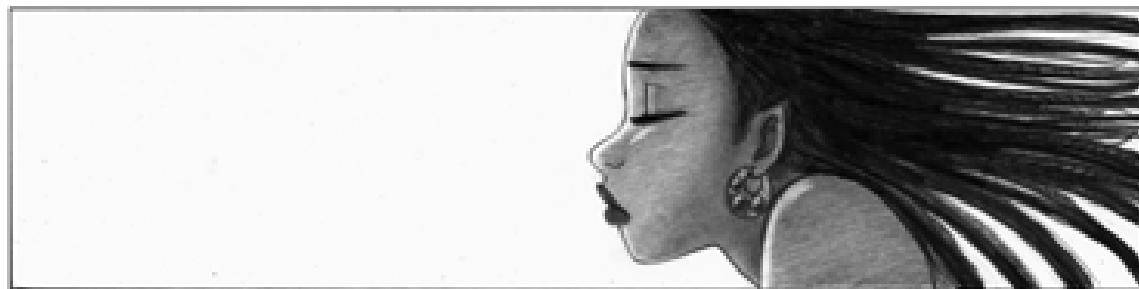
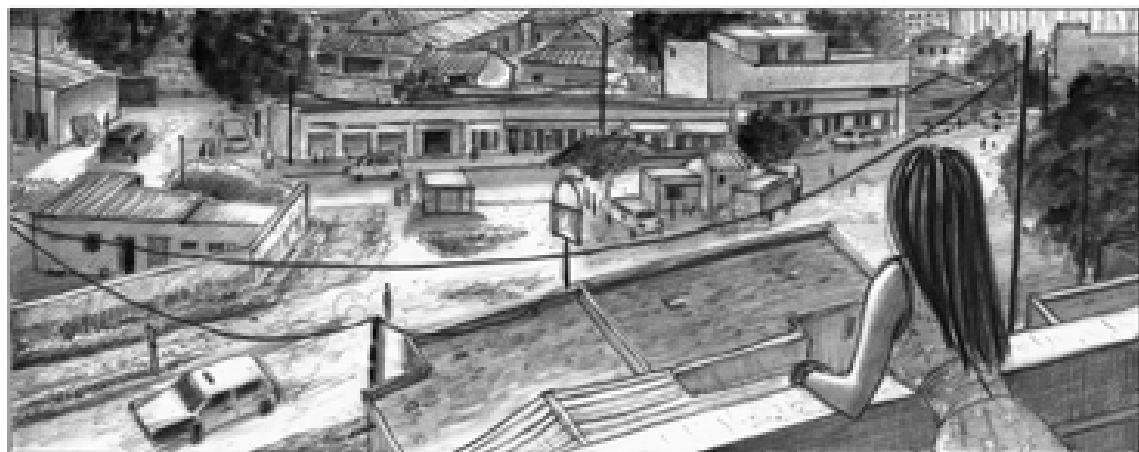




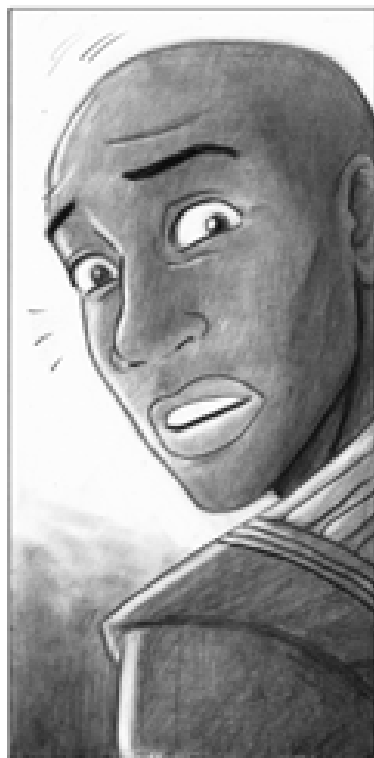
And well, it went right. I sat there for an hour staring at it and then I ended up putting it on the other side of the lane. It was at that precise moment that I understood that I couldn't let life choose for me.



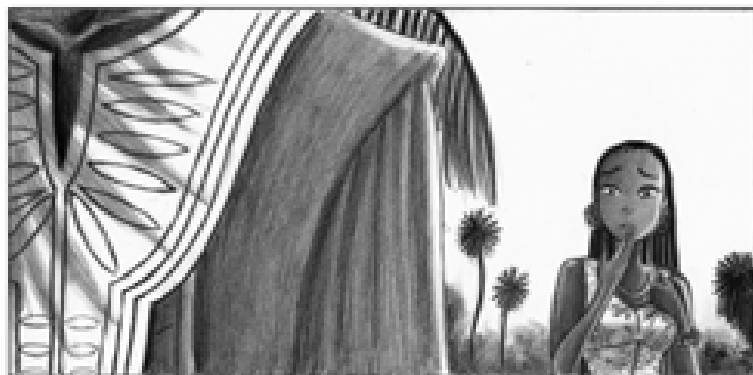


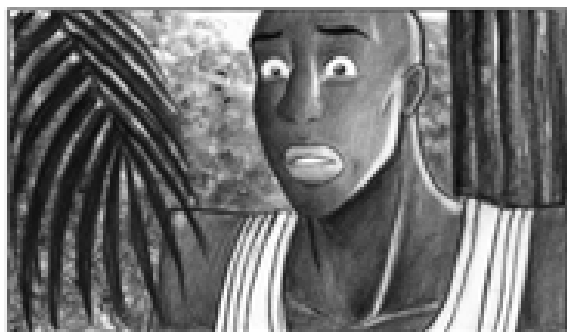
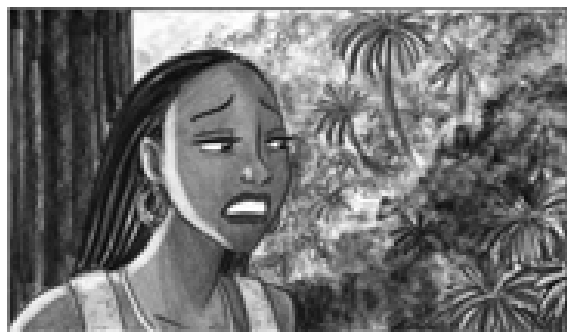


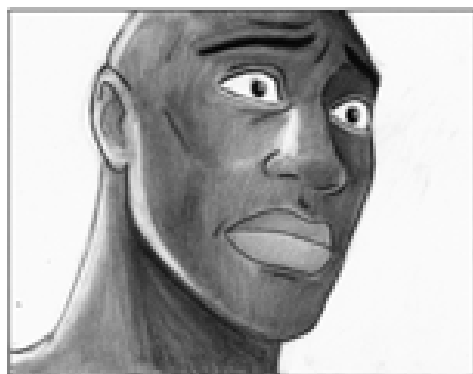
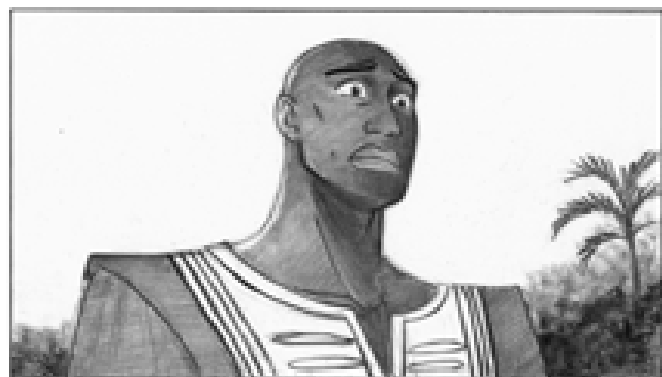










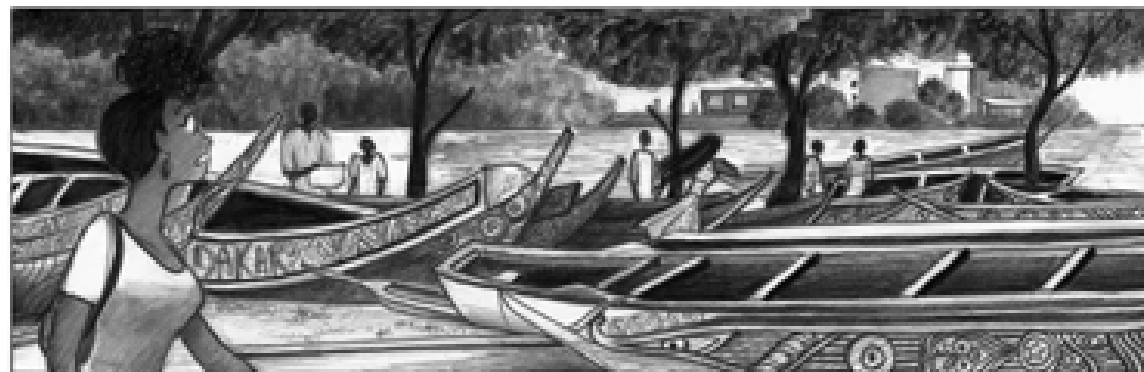






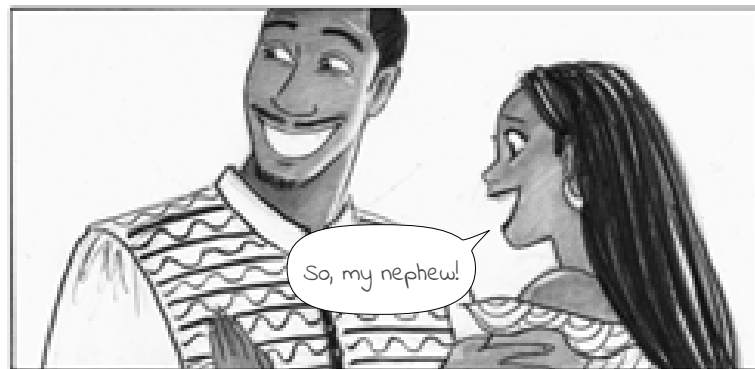
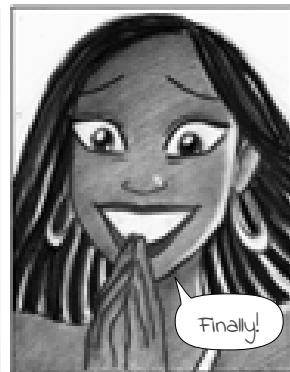
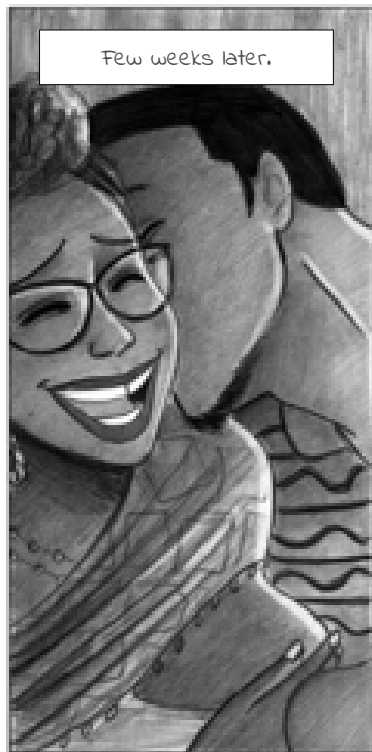


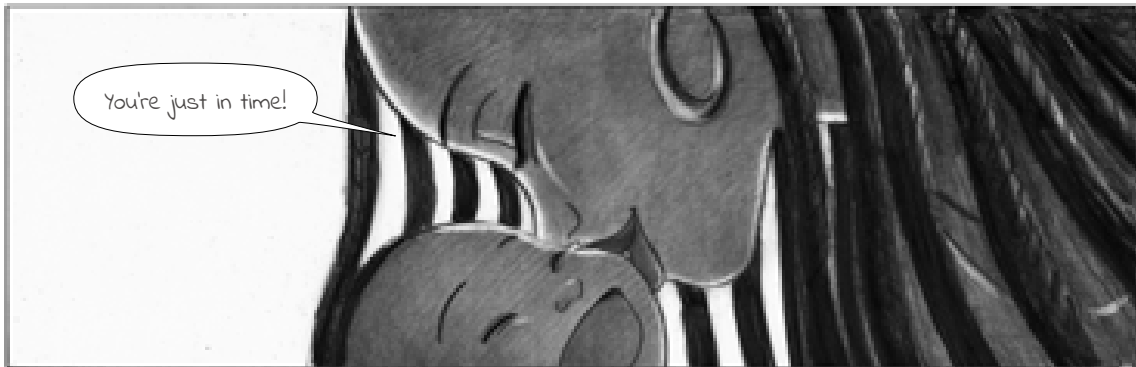
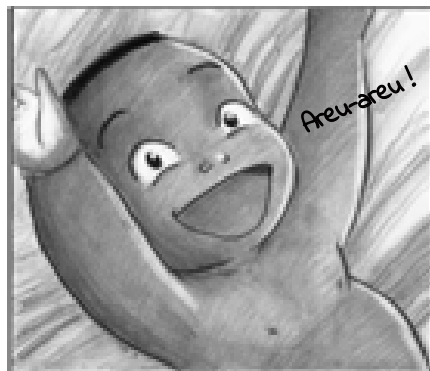


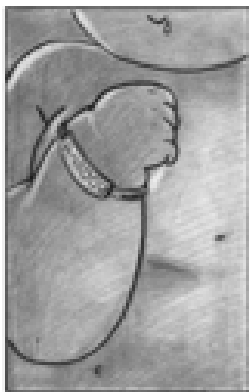














Mariama Ba

To educate, campaign and write in order to raise women's awareness and promote their rights: such was Mariama Ba's credo throughout her life. She belonged to the first generation of Senegalese women who attended French school during the interwar period. She was as much a pioneer in the domain of literature, as she was in the women's movement. The impact of her first novel in and beyond Senegal, in which she denounced polygamy and confronted the problems of the caste-system, testifies to her emblematic status.

Women in African History

By way of various artistic and pedagogical resources available online, this UNESCO project highlights a selection of historical female figures, from Africa and of African descent, who have distinguished themselves in the history of the continent in areas as diverse as politics (Gisèle Rabesahala), diplomacy and resistance against colonization (Njinga Mbandi), defence of women's rights (Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti) and environmental protection (Wangari Maathai).

The selection of women figures proposed in the framework of this project is not exhaustive and represents only a small part of the contribution of African women, known and unknown, to the history of their countries, Africa and all mankind.



For additional resources, please visit the web site www.unesco.org/womenin africa